



Our Priorities

We are united to ensure Massachusetts continues to be a great place to live, work, and raise a family. Whether motivated by our democratic values or our religious faith or both, we recognize that our fates are connected, we are one community, and we all do better when we all do better.

Raise Up Massachusetts is committed to building an economy that works for all of us. An economy that invests in families, gives everyone the opportunity to succeed, and creates broadly shared prosperity.

We work to pass laws, through the Legislature or at the ballot box, that support working families with jobs that pay a living wage and policies that allow them to balance work and family. To support important investments in our people and communities, we believe everyone should be asked to pay their fair share.

Our Victories

Throughout 2013 and 2014, more than 100 community organizations, religious groups, labor unions, and business leaders collected over 350,000 signatures on behalf of two ballot initiatives: raising the minimum wage and guaranteeing earned sick time for all Massachusetts workers.

In June 2014, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed legislation giving Massachusetts the highest minimum wage in the country. Raise Up Massachusetts then led the campaign to ensure access to earned sick time for all workers in the Commonwealth by passing Question 4 on the November 2014 ballot.

Our Agenda

This year, Raise Up Massachusetts is focusing on three issues of critical importance to working families in Massachusetts:

Paid Family and Medical Leave will ensure that Massachusetts workers are not forced to choose between work and their own health needs or the well-being of their children and other family members.

A Constitutional Amendment will invest in quality public schools, affordable higher education, and a transportation system that works by creating an additional tax of four percentage points on annual income above one million dollars.

A Living Wage for Big Box Retail and Fast Food Employees will make sure that people who work full-time for large, profitable corporations can earn a living wage of \$15 an hour, so they can make ends meet.

To get involved in our grassroots movement, go to www.raiseupma.org.

Why Paid Family and Medical Leave Matters

Emergencies arise for all of us at some point, but 1.2 million Massachusetts families risk losing their jobs if they take time off work to take care of a family medical emergency or after the birth of a child. Many workers who are eligible for leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act can't afford to take unpaid time off work in an emergency. They're often left having to choose between taking care of a child they love or the job that puts food on the table.

Paid family and medical leave would allow these workers to take time to take care of their health or the health of a loved one without fear of losing their job.

How Paid Family and Medical Leave Works

The Family and Medical Leave and Temporary Disability Leave Insurance Program Bill (H1718), would make employees eligible for job-protected paid leave to recover from a serious illness or injury, to care for a seriously ill or injured family member, or to care for a new child. It prohibits employer retaliation against workers who take time off under these conditions.

Under the legislation, employees would be eligible for temporary disability benefits equal to a percentage of their average weekly wages, capped at \$650/week. Paid leave would last up to 12 weeks to care for a family member or new child, and up to 26 weeks for an employee's own serious illness or injury.

Benefits would be funded through employer premium contributions to the new Family and Employment Security Trust Fund or to private insurance plans, and the bill would allow employers to require employees to contribute up to 50% of the cost of premiums. The bill exempts employers who already provide equivalent paid leave benefits, creates a one-week waiting period before employees can receive benefits if they are out of work due to their own illness or injury, and uses existing agencies for administration and enforcement, keeping costs down.

Why We Need Paid Family and Medical Leave

Paid family and medical leave would help our state's workers, businesses, and economy. Workers could stay home with a newborn child or a seriously ill parent, or take time to recover after an unexpected illness. Businesses would benefit from healthier and more productive employees, while the reduction in worker turnover would generate savings for employers. Paid family and medical leave also keeps money in the pockets of families who then spend it in the local economy.

California and New Jersey have had paid family and medical leave for years, and both workers and businesses report positive effects. In a survey six years after California's law was implemented, 89 to 99 percent of employers reported that paid family and medical leave had either a "positive effect" or "no noticeable effect" on productivity, profitability/ performance, turnover, and employee morale.¹

We need paid family and medical leave for a simple reason: hardworking people shouldn't have to choose between the job they need and the family they love.

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1. Center for Economic and Policy Research, ["Leaves That Pay: Employer and Worker Experiences with Paid Family Leave in California."](#)